



Ministry of Northern  
Development and Mines

[central site](#) | [feedback](#) | [search](#) | [site map](#) | [français](#) |

[WHO WE ARE](#) | [MINES AND MINERALS](#) | [NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT](#) | [THE MNDM NETWORK](#) | [NEWS RELEASES](#)

Location: [Ministry Home](#) > [News Releases](#) >

Friday, February 29, 2008

## News Release

# Ministry of Northern Development and Mines



**Ontario**

Northern Ontario  
Heritage Fund

Fonds du patrimoine  
du Nord de l'Ontario

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## Ontario Invests In Aboriginal Performing Arts Training Centre - #40086

Former Manitowaning General Store Becoming Theatrical Development Facility

SUDBURY – The McGuinty government is promoting wellness and cultural awareness among Aboriginal youth across the North by further investing in the development of Debajehmujig Theatre Group's training and development centre on Manitoulin Island, Northern Development and Mines Minister Rick Bartolucci announced today.

"This new training facility will help foster an interest in the performing arts for Aboriginal youth across the North," said Bartolucci. "Individuals trained at the centre will learn new skills to help them start theatre groups and support other cultural initiatives in their own communities."

The Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) is providing an additional \$250,000 to complete renovations to the Debajehmujig Theatre Group Training and Development Centre, located in a historic building in downtown Manitowaning. The work includes replacing windows as well as installing a heating and cooling system. The project also involves the purchase of specialized theatrical equipment. In 2005, the NOHFC invested \$300,000 in this centre.

"The Debajehmujig Theatre Group is one of North America's most successful theatre companies and I am pleased that our government could help bring this project to reality," said Bartolucci, who chairs the NOHFC. "This training centre will help develop actors, playwrights, and technical staff, while encouraging Aboriginal youth to discover and develop untapped skills and new career opportunities."

Other McGuinty government initiatives for northerners include:

- Investing more than \$8 million to date, from the NOHFC, to provide internships and work placements to help some 447 young northerners launch their careers in the North
- Contributing more than \$1.3 million to date, to help some 65 young entrepreneurs with the start-up of small businesses across the North
- Providing nearly \$640,000 in a mining training program for Aboriginal youth in Northwestern Ontario.

These initiatives are part of the government's Northern Prosperity Plan for building stronger northern communities. The Northern Prosperity Plan has four pillars: Strengthening the North and its Communities; Listening to and Serving Northerners Better; Competing Globally; and Providing Opportunities for All. Since 2003, investments in infrastructure, postsecondary education, research and innovation and key economic sectors have strengthened Ontario's economic advantage and continue to build opportunity.

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